المجلس الاسلامي
Islamic Council

21 May 1987

Mr Ian Martin
Secretary General
Amnesty International

Dear Mr Martin,

Political Prisoners in Egypt-

I should like to draw your personal attention to the current situation in Egypt and to request that you send a representative to Cairo to investigate these reports on your own behalf, in an effort to halt the needless suffering being inflicted on many innocent people and their families.

In recent days arrests in Cairo alone are reliably reported at over 3500, all under the emergency laws, with no formal (or otherwise) accusations levelled against those detained. Moreover, the prisoners are being very badly treated. The arrests are continuing and it is the Egyptian government's stated intention to reopen Tur prison (capacity 9000 plus), which used to be used for only the very worst criminal offenders.

These arrests have happened since the incident involving Hassan Abu Basha, the former Minister of Interior under Sadat, who, as head of the Mubahas Amn al Dawla (State Security Intelligence), was the man directly responsible for the widespread torture that took place at that time. However, no one has indicated responsibility for that attack, nor has the government accused anyone, or any group, for it. It is clear that the incident is being used as an excuse to round up the political opposition.

Another ominous observation is that all reports of torture (which include burning with cigarettes, electric shock treatment, suspending by the arms, etc) seem reserved to political prisoners.

I know that Amnesty International will do its utmost to redress this tragic situation, and I will keep you fully informed as reports reach me.
With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam
Secretary General

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